

Commissioner's Weekly Field Memo
Friday, October 26, 2012

Notes from Acting Commissioner Abbott

1. Governor's Office holds conference call on approaching storm
2. State House summit focuses on success for [Latino \(Hispanic\) students](#)

From the R.I. Department of Education (RIDE)

Legal:

3. Decision posted on [teacher dismissal](#)

Conferences

4. [Sustainable Schools](#) Summit scheduled for Friday, November 2 - *Reminder*

Meetings and Training

5. First meeting scheduled for District [Teachers of the Year](#)
6. Training session scheduled on administering [21st Century Skills](#) Assessment
7. RIDE to host Building a [Data-Ready District](#) seminar series
8. Registration opens for [Rhode Island Model](#) Summer Academy follow-up trainings – *Reminder*

Educator Evaluations

9. RIDE posts responses to questions from principals on [educator evaluations](#)

Action Items

10. [Nonpublic-textbook reimbursement](#) information due by **December 7**
-

Action Item Calendar

Thursday (Nov. 1): [Presidential Scholar](#) nominations due
Thursday (November 1) : [PARCC readiness](#) updates due
December 7: Nonpublic-textbook reimbursement form due

Notes from Acting Commissioner Abbott

1. Governor's Office holds conference call on approaching storm

The Governor's Office held a conference call this morning to brief all state agencies on Hurricane Sandy, which is approaching New England. The report this morning indicated that we can expect heavy winds (gusts up to 50 mph), power outages, heavy rainfall, and some flooding. The storm is expected to begin on Sunday night, with squalls through the

day on Monday. The main strength of the storm is expected to occur on Monday night and Tuesday morning, and the storm may last until Wednesday.

At this time, the Governor has made no decision about declaring a state of emergency and closing state operations. I know you will be in touch with your local emergency officials and with your transportation company as you decide about whether to cancel school during the storm. The Governor's Office has scheduled conference calls for the evening and over the weekend, and we will communicate with you, most likely through Tim Ryan, of RISSA, if there are any significant announcements concerning schools.

The Rhode Island Broadcasters Association network is in operation and prepared to publish any announcements about cancellations, so please be sure you are registered on www.ribroadcasters.com and that you know your User ID # and your password. Let's all hope for safe conditions and a smooth opening of schools next week.

2. State House summit focuses on success for Latino (Hispanic) students

Yesterday (October 25) I had the opportunity to participate in an Education Summit entitled "Supporting the Equitable Delivery of a 21st Century Education: The Role of Policy in Latino Student Success." Sen. Juan M. Pichardo organized this event, with support from the National Conference of State Legislatures and National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials. Senator Whitehouse and Congressman Cicilline, along with members of the General Assembly and many people from the education field attended this event.

The summit focused on an issue that is deeply important to all Rhode Islanders: providing all students with equal access to a rigorous curriculum, holding high expectations for all students, and ensuring that all students have the high-quality instruction, the resources, and the support to succeed in school. There is no doubt that across our state wide achievement gaps separate the performance of students at large from the performance of Hispanic students and from other racial or ethnic minorities. Because of our concern about these widening achievement gaps, we designed our new accountability system to make proficiency levels and closing achievement gaps the most heavily weighted factors in determining school classifications. As we move forward with our work toward transforming education in Rhode Island, it is essential that we raise proficiency levels for Hispanic students, Black students, and economically disadvantaged students as well as for students with disabilities and English Learners.

I thank Senator Pichardo for organizing this summit, which opened a statewide conversation on how we can best advance learning and achievement for all Rhode Island students.

From RIDE

Legal

3. Decision posted on teacher dismissal

Our Legal Office has posted this decision on the dismissal of a nontenured teacher:

http://www.ride.ri.gov/applications/RideDirectory/DOCS/2012/017-12_Johnson_v_Providence_S._B.102312.pdf

Conferences

4. Sustainable Schools Summit scheduled for Friday, November 2 - *Reminder*

RIDE, in conjunction with the Rhode Island Sustainable Schools Network, Rhode Island College, and the Apeiron Institute, extends an invitation to educators, students, principals, facilities managers, parents, and other education stakeholders to attend the 5th annual Rhode Island Sustainable Schools Summit, on Friday, **November 2**, from 8 a.m. – 1 p.m., at Rhode Island College, 600 Mount Pleasant Ave., Providence 02908. The summit will showcase successful local initiatives and provide participants with the knowledge, resources, and support network to move their schools toward greater sustainability in their facilities and their curriculum.

Please visit the Apeiron Institute [website](http://www.apeiron.org/new/education/sustainable_schools_summit_12.php) for an agenda and to register for this event, or use the following link:

http://www.apeiron.org/new/education/sustainable_schools_summit_12.php

Meetings and Training

5. First meeting scheduled for District Teachers of the Year

The District Teacher of the Year Network group will have its first meeting on Wednesday, November 7, from 4 – 6 p.m., at the Rhode Island Foundation, 1 Union Station, Providence. This meeting will provide an opportunity for the newly appointed 2012-13 District Teachers of the Year to

learn more about the State Teacher of the Year application process and to hear about the opportunities and experiences from past recipients: Rhode Island State Teacher of the Year (Julie Lima Boyle, 2012) and National Teacher of the Year (Kathleen Mellor, 2004). For more information, contact Mary Keenan, at mary.keenan@ride.ri.gov .

6. Training session scheduled on administering 21st Century Skills Assessment

RIDE has scheduled a training session on 21st Century Skills Assessment for 8th Grade Students, to be held on Thursday, **November 8**, from 8 a.m. – noon, at the Lippitt School, 30 Almy St., Warwick 02886.

This training session is designed for those who will be proctoring or coordinating the 21st Century Skills Assessment for their 8th-grade students. Participants will learn details about the assessment, proctoring, setting up of classes, and reporting.

Please bring class lists to the training session.

Space is limited. Register now, at:

<http://www.eride.ri.gov/WorkshopReg/viewWorkshop.aspx?workshopid=626>

More information is available on the RIDE website, at:

http://www.ride.ri.gov/OMP/VL/TechLit/21CSA/21CSA_home.aspx

7. RIDE to host Building a Data-Ready District seminar series

RIDE is launching a very important series of “Building a Data-Ready District” seminars as part of the Rhode Island Data Quality Initiative. All Technology Directors, Data Managers, and other data-entry or data-collections staff are strongly encouraged to attend. These seminars will provide a general introduction to the Data Quality Initiative, a presentation on data-quality best practices, and a facilitated discussion about addressing the realities of implementing best practices. Attendees will also receive a set of take-away materials and resources.

The first seminar is **Thursday** (November 1), from 9 -11 a.m., at RIDE (Room 260, 255 Westminster St./80 Washington Street, Providence). The second seminar – covering the same content with an additional focus on small districts and charter public schools – is scheduled for Thursday, November 15, also at RIDE. Please encourage your data staff to register for one or both of these seminars through the Workshop Calendar, or simply forward the following links directly to the appropriate staff.

Parking passes will be available.

Questions about the location and logistics may be directed to Jessica Murphy, at jessica.murphy@ride.ri.gov, and questions about content may be directed to Andrew Keller, at andrew.keller@ride.ri.gov.

To register, go to:

Seminar 1:

<http://www.eride.ri.gov/WorkshopReg/viewWorkshop.aspx?workshopid=598>

Seminar 2:

<http://www.eride.ri.gov/WorkshopReg/viewWorkshop.aspx?workshopid=625>

8. Registration opens for Rhode Island Model Summer Academy follow-up trainings – *Reminder*

Registration is open for the Rhode Island Model Edition II Module 1 trainings (follow up to the Summer Academies) for both personnel evaluating teachers and personnel evaluating building administrators. The trainings are being offered multiple times at different locations across the state over a six-week period, from November 27 to January 8. The Edition II Module 1 trainings will build on the Summer Academies and provide ongoing support for full implementation of the Rhode Island Model. The trainings are required for all personnel evaluating teachers and building administrators in LEAs implementing the Rhode Island Model, and early registration is recommended.

For additional information about the Edition II Module 1 trainings, including registration directions, please go to the *Training Registration* page on the RIDE website, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/EducatorQuality/EducatorEvaluation/TrainingReg.aspx>.

Educator Evaluations

9. RIDE posts responses to questions from principals on educator evaluations

At the Rhode Island Association of School Principals (RIASP) general membership meeting last week (October 17), staff members from RIDE responded to a series of questions on educator evaluation that the RIASP board presented. Approximately 50 RIASP members were in attendance; we have posted the questions and answers from that meeting on the our website.

You can access the questions and answers from the RIASP meeting at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/EducatorQuality/EducatorEvaluation/EdEvalAnnounce.aspx>

Action Items

10. Nonpublic-textbook reimbursement information due by December 7

In order to receive reimbursement for nonpublic textbooks, LEAs must submit a verification form to RIDE. All information on the Textbook Verification Form, including the superintendent's signature, must be provided. The form and submission instructions are available at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/Applications/textbook.aspx>
(Nonpublic-textbook reimbursement).

The verification form and any supporting documentation are due at RIDE by **December 7**.

RIDE will post this field memo on Tuesday, at:

[http://www.ride.ri.gov/Commissioner/fieldmemos/default
.aspx](http://www.ride.ri.gov/Commissioner/fieldmemos/default.aspx)